

**California Department of Social Services
Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project**

**Semi-Annual Progress Report
March 30, 2009**

This semi-annual progress report covers the reporting period from July 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008, and provides an overview of implementation and monitoring tasks, county project activities, and evaluation efforts for the California Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project (CAP) as required in Section 5.4 of the federal Waiver Terms and Conditions.

I. OVERVIEW

On March 31, 2006, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) received approval from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for the CAP. The five-year demonstration project allows counties flexibility to use federal and state foster care maintenance and administrative funds for the provision of direct services to children and their families. This flexible funding waiver demonstration supports child welfare practice, program, and system improvements for early intervention, reunification efforts, and reduction in out-of-home placements.

The intent of the CAP is to test a capped allocation strategy of federal Title IV-E and State General Fund Assistance and Administrative costs and supports improved safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families in California. Foster care savings that occur as a result of the waiver demonstration will be reinvested by the participating counties in child welfare services program improvements. The target population for the CAP is Title IV-E eligible and non-Title IV-E eligible children ages zero through nineteen currently in out-of-home placement, or who are at risk of entering or re-entering foster care.

Alameda County and Los Angeles County are the two participating counties. The demonstration project was implemented on July 1, 2007. At that time, 36 percent of the 74,969 children and youth in child welfare supervised foster care were living in these CAP counties. Although there are only two counties, the impact of the waiver demonstration is over a third of the statewide foster care caseload in California.

The CDSS is required to conduct an independent, third party evaluation consisting of a process evaluation, outcome evaluation, and a cost analysis. The CDSS has contracted with the San Jose State University (SJSU) Research Foundation to conduct the evaluation with Dr. Charlie Ferguson as the principal investigator for the project. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine whether and how changes in the funding structure for foster care will impact the functioning of county child welfare systems and relevant probation systems. Using an interrupted time series design, the evaluation will look at patterns in key child welfare outcomes and expenditures prior to the start of the demonstration and then will track changes during the course of implementation.

II. CDSS ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT DEMONSTRATION

During the first year, the CDSS cross-divisional implementation team completed fiscal implementation activities and performed overall project monitoring and oversight. Significant state-level efforts during that time included developing new flexible funding mechanisms, new budget allocations, a two-county claiming system, and programmatic changes to support county project strategies and initiatives.

Activities during year two in this reporting period have primarily focused on operating the fiscal claiming and payment system; technical assistance provision to the counties to address various fiscal, program, and operational issues; and contract oversight and support for the evaluation.

The CDSS Fiscal Workgroup staff conducted periodic conference calls and meetings with the counties to review claiming activities and expenditure reports and a forum to resolve any issues or problems. Specific conference calls were conducted to address the overpayment procedures for the CAP counties, annual reconciliation reports and identification of reinvestment savings, and the use of waiver and non-waiver allocations.

As previously reported to DHHS, the initial testing for the IV-E Waiver Access Database application (System) was completed and is operational with a manual process backup in place. However, upon further State/County Fiscal Workgroup meetings, the System required augmentation to meet the complex tracking of sub-components of costs from various program ledgers to manage the waiver costs from the non-waiver costs in one system. The timing of the system augmentation was hindered by the loss of experienced staff, inadequate candidate pool to meet the complex needs of this position, and a subsequent department-wide hiring freeze. Current redirected staff to this project are performing the payment functions and generating county reports with the manual payment and reconciliation process only. No problems have occurred as a result of this temporary change. The Financial Services Bureau County Administration and Services Section (FSB-CASS) anticipates testing the System and implementing the System by May 30, 2009. In addition, the FSB-CASS will be pursuing an exemption to fill the waiver position as the budget allows.

The Federal Foster Care IV-E 1 Reports have been submitted via electronic submission. The June 2008 quarter was submitted on September 30, 2008 and the September 2008 quarter was submitted on December 31, 2008. The first two quarters were actual expenditures. The upcoming report with the December 2008 actuals will be submitted on March 30, 2009. In addition, County Fiscal Letter (CFL) No. 08/09-30 providing the planning allocation for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009-09 for the waiver counties was issued by CDSS on December 23, 2009.

Program staff activities continuing into year two included: CDSS CAP project team management and coordination; participation in the CDSS Fiscal Workgroup; CAP project team meetings; monthly monitoring with county waiver coordinators; reviewing project data; federal reporting activities; addressing waiver related program and policy issues; and technical assistance provision related to county requests.

Specific issues addressed with the counties included: access to Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) for probation, clarification of program requirements for state general fund allocations included in the waiver, and discussions on implementation impacts of the new federal legislation on the CAP counties.

During the reporting period, an administrative reorganization took place within the Estimates and Research Services Branch resulting in the Research and Evaluation Bureau becoming part of the Performance Monitoring and Research Bureau (PMRB). The new bureau will continue to perform the same oversight and monitoring functions for the CAP evaluation. In addition, a Research Program Specialist staff within the Fiscal Policy Bureau is providing assistance to PMRB staff to address evaluation issues and ensure the evaluator is able to obtain necessary fiscal and outcome data sources. Staff activities have continued to support the following: monitoring and overseeing the evaluation contract and evaluator activities; review and approving invoices; processing a budget adjustment; participation in CAP project meetings; researching outcome data source issues; coordination of fiscal data sources for the evaluation; and support for the State/County Evaluation Workgroup meetings. Now established at SJSU, the evaluator has completed the personnel recruitment process and hired a research staff to work on the evaluation. In addition, a graduate student has joined the staff for the evaluation.

During this reporting period CDSS has monitored pending new federal foster care legislation and is now addressing implementation issues for Public Law 110-351, Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. Any impacts to the CAP counties will be identified as part of the statewide implementation process. At this time, CDSS is requesting discussions with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) for developing a mutually agreeable strategy to adjust the federal capped allocation in response to the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This adjustment would be necessary in order to apply the provisions for increasing the Federal Medical Assistance Percentages (FMAP) to the two CAP counties that are currently operating under their established capped allocation.

The CAP counties have been successful in realizing a significant fiscal savings from the first year and have identified strategies for reinvestment. The CDSS is auditing supplemental claims upon submission by the counties. The final county savings will be reported by CDSS for each county after the June quarter adjustment claim is audited and closeout has occurred in September 2009.

Fiscal challenges related to current budget shortfalls and the fiscal emergency in California remains an ongoing concern. The recently approved California 2009 Budget Act did not contain significant reductions in county local assistance for child welfare. There was no impact on the General Fund (GF) capped allocations for the CAP counties. However, the budget included provisions requiring voter approval to redirect funding into children's programs and will not occur until May 19, 2009. At this time, any potential loss of GF should not impact the state's ability to provide the required match for the waiver Title IV-E funding.

Updated Waiver Demonstration Key Tasks and Timeline

A. General Project Implementation

Tasks/Activities	Deliverables	Timeframe
Establish a support structure and implementation team for the waiver demonstration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established Title IV-E Waiver Unit CDSS cross-divisional implementation team Develop specialized workgroups with areas of responsibilities/ tasks 	<p>Completed July 2004</p> <p>Completed January 2005</p> <p>Completed April 2006</p>
Provide information to the general public, counties, public/private community partners, and stakeholder groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDSS documents (ACL, ACIN, CFL) CDSS - CFSD Webpage Email address established Conference calls and email communications Press releases and public presentations County Forums 	April 2006 and ongoing
Establish Operating Authority for the Waiver Demonstration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of language in budget trailer bill 	Completed June 2006
Develop Cost Development Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish claiming codes for State and counties Submit Plan to DHHS 	<p>Completed May 2, 2006</p> <p>Completed June 30, 2006</p>
Initial Design and Implementation Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive counties plan proposal summaries Submit IDI report to DHHS 	<p>Completed July 21, 2006</p> <p>Completed August 11, 2006</p>
State/County Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop provisions for State General Fund, opt-out, State waivers, and fiscal claiming Complete Draft MOU Issue MOU to counties Signed and executed MOU 	<p>Completed January 2007</p> <p>Completed January 2007</p> <p>Completed May 4, 2007</p> <p>Completed June 2007</p>
State Waiver Requests Under the State Demonstration Project Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify statutes/regulations to be waived from County Plans and any county waiver requests Complete the formal order of the director Publish legal notice Notification to State Legislature 	<p>Completed May 2007</p> <p>Completed June 26, 2007</p> <p>Completed June 30, 2007</p> <p>Completed July 2007</p>
Implement Waiver Demonstration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verify all pre-implementation activities are completed Confirm counties are fiscally and programmatically set-up to begin the county project implementation activities Implement by July 1, 2007 	<p>Completed June 2007</p> <p>Completed June 2007</p> <p>Completed July 1, 2007</p>

B. Allocation, Claiming, and Reporting Procedures

Tasks/Activities	Deliverables	Timeframe
Develop Federal and State Allocations for Participating Counties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed upon federal allocation DHHS approval for federal allocation 	<p>Completed February 2007</p> <p>Completed June 2007</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed upon proposed State allocation subject to State budget Release county allocation letters 	Completed December 2006 Completed January 18, 2008
State/County Claiming and Reporting Policy and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop county claiming and reporting procedures Complete State reconciliation to allocations Quarterly federal reporting 	Completed January 2008 Completed August 2007 Completed June 2007
Cost Allocation Plan Amendment (As Required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare amendment to State Cost Allocation Plan for any Title IV-E waiver demonstration activities Submit any amendments to DHHS for approval 	No amendment needed.

C. County Selection and County Implementation

Tasks/Activities	Deliverables	Timeframe
Solicit County Interest in Waiver Demonstration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue initial ACIN to solicit interested counties Receive Letters of Interest Hold interested counties forum and conference calls 	Completed April 2006
Solicit Letter of Intent from Counties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue ACIN providing information and intent submission requirements Receive Letters by due date 	Completed June 30, 2006 Completed July 21, 2006
County Five Year Implementation Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide instructions and technical assistance to intent counties for developing County Five Year Plan Due date for final plan submissions to CDSS Review and approve plans 	Completed August 2006 through March 2007 March - April 2007 Completed May 2007
County Training and Technical Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conference Calls Fiscal training as needed Individual county technical assistance consultation Field site visits as requested 	August 2006 and ongoing June 2007 and ongoing April 2007 and ongoing April 2007 and ongoing
Implementation Start Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County-level project implementation begins State project monitoring begins 	July 1, 2007 July 1, 2007 and ongoing

D. Evaluation

Tasks/Activities	Deliverables	Timeframe
Initial Evaluation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan submitted to DHHS 	Completed February 3, 2006
Evaluation Contractor Specifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit specification for contractor agreement to DHHS for approval 	Completed May 30, 2006
Evaluator Contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executed Evaluator Contract New Executed Evaluation Contract with SJSU Research Foundation 	Completed October 23, 2006 Completed March 1, 2008
Final Evaluation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluator consultation with participating counties 	December 2006 and ongoing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluator to finalize the evaluation plan incorporating the County Five Year Plans • Submit final evaluation plan to DHHS for approval • DHHS plan approval 	<p>Completed April 20, 2007</p> <p>Completed June 18, 2007</p> <p>Completed June 29, 2007</p>
Initiate County Evaluation Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Visits to Counties • County Technical Assistance and Training to initiate evaluation activities • Baseline Data Collection • Complete Institutional Review Board Submissions (CHHSA and Sonoma State University-SSU) • Semi-annual and quarterly State/County Evaluation meetings 	<p>December 2006 and ongoing</p> <p>Completed April - June 2007</p> <p>January - June 2007</p> <p>July 1, 2007 and ongoing.</p> <p>CHHSA exemption request approved April 2007. SSU request approved June 2007.</p> <p>December 2006 and ongoing</p>
Observation Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Collection Begins Initial Baseline Site Visit Follow-up Site Visit Ongoing data collection 	<p>July 1, 2007 and ongoing</p> <p>Completed July through September 2007</p> <p>Completed April through June 2008</p> <p>Ongoing activity as scheduled</p>
Interim Evaluation Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit interim evaluation report 60 days after the 10th quarter 	February 28, 2010
Final Evaluation Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit final evaluation report six months after project ends 	December 31, 2012

E. DHHS Submissions

Tasks/Activities	Deliverables	Timeframe
<u>Quarterly Report Submissions</u>		
IDI Report – 1 st Quarterly Progress Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit IDI Report within 120 days 	Completed August 2006
2 nd Quarter Progress Report (Period 8/06 – 9/06)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit quarterly report 	Completed October 30, 2006
3 rd Quarterly Progress Report (Period 10/06 – 12/06)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit quarterly report 	Completed January 30, 2007
4 th Quarterly Progress Report (Period 1/07 – 3/07)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit quarterly report 	Completed April 30, 2007
5 th Quarterly Progress Report (Period 4/07 – 6/07)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit quarterly report 	Completed July 30, 2007
<u>Semi-Annual Progress Reports</u>		
Submit reports twice a year upon implementation beginning July 1, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-Annual Progress Report • 1st Annual Progress Report • Semi-Annual Progress Report 	<p>Completed January 31, 2008 (Period 7/1/07 -12/31/07)</p> <p>Completed July 31, 2008 (Period 7/1/07 – 6/30/08)</p> <p>Completed March 30, 2009 (Period 7/1/08 – 12/31/08)</p>

III. STATUS OF THE DEMONSTRATION

Alameda County

A. OVERVIEW

The Alameda County Social Services Agency (ACSSA), Department of Children and Families Services (Alameda DCFS) and the Probation Department are using the spending flexibility under the CAP for a series of reinvestment strategies to better direct resources to prevention, early intervention, and long-term family-based support strategies that serve youth and their caretakers with localized, familial, and neighborhood-based support services. Strategies and activities identified for implementation build on the continuation and expansion of current county initiatives and projects.

Reform initiatives already in place in Alameda County include: the Assessment Center, the Alternative Response System, Team Decision Making (TDM), Kinship Centers, Family Finding, and Transitional Age and Emancipation Youth Services. Alameda County is also one of five designated California Family to Family (F2F) anchor sites that receive technical assistance and grant resources from the Annie E. Casey Foundation under their national child welfare and foster care reform initiative. Alameda DCFS and Probation are continuing to implement their phase one CAP strategies into year two.

The Alameda DCFS planned phase one strategies to be implemented based on outcome improvement and cost effectiveness during year one were:

- One Child, One Placement - Child Welfare Workers (CWW) Relative Approvals;
- Enhanced Family Finding;
- Expand Reunification Team Decision Making (TDM);
- Expand California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) - Child Welfare Services Linkages Pilot Project; and,
- Implement Permanency Concurrent Planning TDMs.

Two additional strategies were also implemented during the first year. Alameda DCFS moved forward with expanding their Alternative Road to Safety (ARS) Program to all ages and countywide as well as creating a Voluntary Diversion Program.

Based on county reported information, as of December 2008, a total of 2,879 children were receiving child welfare services in Alameda County. Of this total, 798 children are at home with their biological families receiving family maintenance services and 2,081 children are in out-of-home placement. The out-of-home caseload by placement type is: 1,070 are placed with relatives, 115 are placed in county licensed foster homes, 604 are placed in foster family agencies and 292 are placed in group homes.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

At this time, Alameda County has identified reinvestment savings that they are currently seeking Board of Supervisor approval for use in the proposed year two strategies. During year two of the CAP, Alameda DCFS will focus on strengthening prevention and support services for families and has proposed implementing the following strategies:

- Increase the ability of child welfare workers to provide intensive services to families by, reducing caseload to staff ratio, restructuring/retooling the group homes units, and expanding TDM's;
- Enhance the department's ability to recruit county foster parents by implementing a child care option and deepening partnerships with the faith community;
- Enhance the parent advocate program;
- Implement front end family finding and engagement;
- Fully implement the ARS-Family Maintenance program;
- Expand county counsel support in court rooms; and,
- Create a visitation center for families in the reunification program.

For year two Alameda County Probation will continue to implement strategies under the CAP to reduce unnecessary out-of-home placement recommendations/referrals and reduction in the average monthly rate of out-of-home placements for probation youth.

Improved data collection capabilities, program/policy, and education are foundations for the CAP implementation, including:

- Collecting data on primary sources and numbers of out-of-home placement recommendations, including primary issues that have resulted in out-of-home placement;
- Emphasis on the written criteria and guidelines for determining a minor's removal from home;
- Development of review and approval processes that prevent unnecessary recommendations or referrals to out-of-home placement;
- Increased utilization and support to the Family Preservation Unit to prevent unnecessary out-of-home placements and to facilitate improved transitions upon leaving group home care;
- Development of awareness and use of alternate dispositions that may include Camp, Family Preservation, Community Probation, and participation in enhanced Community-based programs;

- Education of new and existing Bench Officers on efforts to treat minors in least restrictive environment while providing improved supportive services to primary caregivers and family; and,
- Continued re-education of vendors' service delivery time frames.

The Alameda DCFS has two core workgroups that each meet once a month to discuss CAP implementation strategies. The Implementation Team plans and implements waiver activities in the Department and Division and consists of the Department's senior managers and representatives from finance, data and research, and probation, and Casey Family Programs. The Executive Team monitors the implementation process, the budget, and addresses barriers to implementation and consists of the Department Head, Agency Director, Finance Director, Probation Chief, Assistant Chief and Department Division Directors. In addition, the Implementation Team works with the Casey Family Programs in the development of the data warehouse as well as staff liaison positions within Alameda DCFS and the Probation Department.

A Title IV-E Waiver Community Forum was held in Alameda County on July 15, 2008. This forum provided a progress update on the CAP and highlighted the strategies implemented during the first year and included presentations by both Alameda DCFS and Probation. Alameda DCFS has presented and will continue to present regular updates on CAP activities to the Board of Supervisors, various community organizations, and various public and private partners.

Alameda County participates in the monthly phone conferences held with Los Angeles County and the CDSS Project Manager and are beginning to establish regular county only on-site meetings to discuss various waiver related topics such as reinvestment strategies, fiscal concerns, and probation specific issues.

EVALUATION ACTIVITIES AND DATA TRACKING

As of June 2008 the state evaluator has completed two rounds of staff focus groups and individual interviews with both Alameda DCFS and Probation. As previously reported, Alameda County has put together a series of data dashboards for internal tracking to assist management in monitoring the effectiveness of the planned activities and monitoring overall caseload and placement numbers. The Waiver Dashboard shows tracking benchmarks for CWS and now includes Probation data and outcomes. An updated Title IV-E Waiver Dashboard Report for this reporting period was provided by the county and is contained in Appendix A.

Additionally, Alameda County is working closely with Casey Family Programs and International Business Machines (IBM) to build a data warehouse, which is projected to be implemented by 2010. The infrastructure implementation, which included the hardware install and certification, has been completed and it is expected that the software install will be completed by the end of January 2009. IBM and ACSSA Information Systems Department (ISD) are working with Alameda DCFS Executives and Managers to develop cross-system reports. ISD is working closely with Alameda

DCFS Research and Evaluation to define reporting needs and build future analytical reporting capacity. To date, five initial data source systems have been identified.

- Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS) comprising 920 data fields-column headings and all case and referrals records. This will include all 10 plus years of history.
- California Welfare Information Network (CalWIN) Social Services Information Reporting System (SSIRS) will contain an extract of 3,085 data fields – all current records available which includes 2 years of history.
- In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) – Case Management, Information and Payroll System (CMIPS). The data source extract will include all available fields (four main files) and all current records on recipients and providers.
- Probation VersaForm includes 72 Probation-selected fields and all current records.
- ACSSA SMART system for Adult and Aging, Adoption Assistance case management, and Employment Services programs, includes 168 data reporting fields of all current cases.

IBM is contractually obligated to provide ten reports by June 2009 and provide assistance to develop a robust in-house report generating capacity. The first ten reports include three for validation with current agency reports, two that will be tailored for Alameda DCFS, one that will serve Alameda DCFS (and all other departments), and four for the all other departments/divisions. Additionally, data for these ten reports will automatically support a dramatically expanded reporting capability for Alameda DCFS.

ACSSA Research and Evaluation will be particularly well situated to produce enhanced reporting out of the SSIRS Warehouse as data becomes available starting in April 2009. Lastly, Computer Based Training modules have been purchased and will be deployed before the end of January 2009. Super Users will learn Cognos queries and complex reporting functionality. As data becomes available in the warehouse beginning in March 2009, Super users will be guided in report development using actual right time data. Super users will assist general Cognos users with learning to navigate Cognos for general reporting efforts beginning in February 2009. Super users will be asked to assist general users in basic report generation.

C. IMPLEMENTED STRATEGIES AND EXPENDITURES

ALAMEDA DCFS

As referenced above, Alameda DCFS used the enhanced fiscal flexibility under the CAP to fund a number of new programs including:

- ARS prevention program to reduce probability of children entering care;
- Voluntary diversion to non-child welfare relative guardianships;

- Front-end family finding to support initial placements with relatives;
- Expanded Kinship Support to better support relative placements;
- Enhanced County Counsel activities to reduce time children are in care;
- New ARS-Family Maintenance program targeted at reducing re-entry rates; and,
- Creation of a waiver coordinator position at the Division Director level.

Updated information on the implementation status and activities during the last six months for these programs was provided by the county and is provided below.

Alameda DCFS implemented the Another Road to Safety program for families in the Family Maintenance Program. Staff have been trained, have participated in a retreat, and have begun to accept referrals into the program. The Voluntary Diversion Program has also been implemented. The county has finalized the plans for front end family finding and engagement and has determined that they will contract out some of the family finding services and combine them with the placement program.

Alameda DCFS implemented CHAT (also known as Icebreakers), but have run into challenges with some foster families unwilling to participate and are currently working through the concerns and issues for these foster families. The assessment of TDM and Emancipation Conferences has been completed. The assessment resulted in a determination not merge the processes as they are different in structure and purpose, but to expand capacity of current supervisors to conduct Emancipation Conferences.

In addition, as previously referenced in this section, the first phase of the data warehouse implementation has been completed. These activities have included hiring a contractor, building the server, determining the data systems to be inputted during phase one, and developing the first round of cross agency reports to be tested.

PROBATION

Current Probation efforts have included implementing multi-disciplinary teams to assess failing youth; expanding field units engaged in providing front end, preventative services; and continued planning and development of Probation Rehabilitation Intensive Services and Management (PRISM), the new case management system.

Over the last six months the Probation Department has focused on evaluation of their data capabilities, plans to improve such, and development of a new level of intervention in their continuum of care that will re-evaluate and support youth that are not complying with their probation plan and are at risk of escalation to a placement order.

The Probation Department has been very limited in their ability to collect and analyze important data related to their CAP strategies due to both the antiquated Juvenile Court Information System (JUVIS) and VersaForm database. JUVIS was developed over 25 years ago and tracks all youth referred to Probation, their detention status, arrests and findings, and Court orders. VersaForm, a DOS based system, currently collects

Placement, Family Preservation Unit, and Camp data and is very limited in its ability to report any aggregated data. The new PRISM system that is being incrementally built through contract with the county's central Information Technology Department (ITD) and key Probation staff, will replace JUVIS. Due to numerous central ITD staff changes, the PRISM development has experienced delays and the basic replacement of JUVIS is not anticipated to "go live" until 2010. Many of the case management and report capabilities, including Placement data are planned for development after the "go live" date. As a result, Probation consulted with county central ITD and ACSSA's ISD data warehouse staff to evaluate options related to the VersaForm system. After consideration of the PRISM development timeline, waiver goals, and limited capabilities of VersaForm, the decision was made to replace VersaForm with an Access database that will eventually be connected to PRISM.

Probation program and central ITD staff are reviewing the VersaForm elements and developing expanded capabilities for the replacement system, including the ability to track primary issues resulting in out-of-home placement, time in placement, and transition data for youth in group home care. The timeline for completion of the new system is four to six months. The new system will allow placement staff access to important placement data and will allow Probation to better assess progress with CAP implementation goals.

In the meantime, weekly reports on the number of youth in group home care and staff's monthly report on the number of Family Preservation youth are shared with Alameda DCFS staff to include in the Waiver Dashboard. Upon approval of the Presiding Judge, the VersaForm system and the new replacement system will be a part of the new data warehouse.

Another primary focus of the Probation Department over the past six months has been development of a new level of intervention to address youth that are failing probation prior to a return to Court for possible escalation of a Court order and need for out-of-home placement.

The development of a Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) process to function as another level in Probation's continuum of care is supported through recommendations in the Huskey Report, an evaluation of Alameda County's Juvenile Justice system by consultant Ms. Bobbie Huskey and Associates. A Huskey Committee, spearheaded by Board of Supervisor Gail Steele, is working together to move forward concepts in the report, including a focus on MDTs that assist Probation youth that are "falling through the cracks" of the system. Best practices in MDTs have been researched by the committee and possible development of county-wide teams has been explored and documented.

Probation's Youthful Offender Block Grant (YOBG) funding has resulted in the ability to further develop the MDT process for probation youth. A consultant has been hired to develop the MDT process plan. A Memorandum of Understanding with the County Behavioral Health Services is in place to secure a psychiatric social worker to be part of

the team. Interviews have taken place and although a hiring freeze has delayed the process, the exemption from the freeze is anticipated to be in place in February 2009.

The YOBG funding is also being utilized to transition county-wide Youth Service Centers to provide case management services to youth and their families that are referred to the MDT. Although the Youth Service Centers have traditionally received Juvenile Probation and Camp (JPCF) funding for case management services to youth that are primarily defined in statute as truant/incorrigible/runaway youth, they have served probation youth and as a result of JPCF funding cuts, have agreed to transition part of their services to MDT referred youth and their families.

Training on the probation process and the case manager's role as a family partner that will assist the family to understand and adhere to probation/court orders and engage in supportive services in their neighborhood has begun.

Probation views these case management services as providing significant supports. The development of a relationship between probation youth/families and community-based organization staff that understand the Probation/Court directives and the services available in their immediate community will provide extra support for engagement in services that will strengthen the family and address the minor's risks/needs. This added partnership will promote positive transition through the probation process and after juvenile justice involvement for on-going support.

The future focus for Probation will be completion of the new database to track Placement, Family Preservation Unit, and Camp youth and the development and implementation of MDTs for youth that are at risk of out-of-home placement.

Los Angeles County

A. OVERVIEW

Under the CAP, Los Angeles County is using the financial flexibility to make strategic investments in structural and programmatic reforms needed to better serve children and families. These reform efforts build on significant systems improvements already underway among county departments and community partners in Los Angeles County. The ongoing reform efforts implemented by Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services (LA DCFS) to achieve improved safety, permanence, and reduced reliance on out-of-home care are: Points of Engagement (POE), Structured Decision Making (SDM), Team Decision Making (TDM), Concurrent Planning, and Permanency Partners Program. In addition, Los Angeles County is also one of the F2F anchor sites.

LA DCFS and Probation are continuing to implement the following CAP strategies:

LA DCFS

- Expansion of Family Team Decision Making (FTDM) Conferences;

- Focused Family Finding and Engagement through Pilot Specialized Youth Permanency (YP) Units at Three Regional Offices; and,
- Up-front Assessments on High-Risk Cases for Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Issues.

Probation

- Enhanced Cross-Systems Case Assessment and Case Planning;
- Expansion of Functional Family Therapy (FFT);
- Restructure of Placement Services; and,
- Utilization of Aftercare Support Services.

During the first year of the CAP from July 1, 2007 to June 31, 2008, the out-of-home caseload reported by LA DCFS decreased by 10 percent (from 23,561 to 21,194). This trend has continued into the current reporting period. A DCFS fact sheet from January 2009 is provided in Appendix B. The average monthly population for probation youth residing in group homes decreased over 15 percent from the previous fiscal year.

SUMMARY OF DIRECT SERVICES

The services summarized below were provided by the county during this reporting period under the CAP initiatives and are detailed in subsequent sections of the report.

For LA DCFS, FTDM has been expanded to provide Permanency Planning Conferences (PPCs) to youth in group home care in an effort to expedite permanency for these youth; over 600 PPCs have been conducted for identified group home youth during the Waiver period. YP Units have been staffed, and social workers in these units are carrying reduced caseloads in an effort to locate and connect high need youth with permanency resources. These units currently serve close to 200 youth. Finally, approximately 790 up-front assessments have been conducted to assess referrals involving substance abuse, domestic violence and/or mental health issues in the DCFS Compton, Metro North and Wateridge Offices and the Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP) since May 2008.

LA Probation and Mental Health have conducted approximately 650 Cross-Systems Case Assessments, 540 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2007-08 and 110 during the first six months of FY 2008-09. Probation provided aftercare supervision services to approximately 129 youth in FY 2007-08, and FFT services were provided to 145 families by both Probation and Probation contracted FFT providers during the first six months of FY 2008-09; of the 145 families provided FFT, 15 successfully completed FFT.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES

Los Angeles County has identified that LA DCFS and Probation generated reinvestment funds during the first year of the CAP and project spending a portion of this funding, with

a majority going to contracted services in the community, in Fiscal Year (FY) 2008-09 and FY 2009-10.

With the recent official announcement that the United States has been in an economic recession since December 2007, the county has expressed a growing concern that the economic downturn could result in increased maltreatment and larger caseloads for family maintenance and out-of-home care. However, at present, the county has confirmed that the LA DCFS foster care census is continuing to decrease and their county trend data for the last seven years shows that the foster care census did not increase or decrease in correlation to the unemployment rate in Los Angeles County.

PLANNING/OVERSIGHT EFFORTS

Based on the success of first sequence priorities and input from community partners and stakeholders, the Departments have developed the second sequence plan for FY 2008-09 and FY 2009-10. The Departments requested Board of Supervisors approval of the second sequence plan and authority to hire staff positions to support the expansion and/or implementation of CAP strategies on February 3, 2009. Both Departments monitor their expenditures under the capped allocation on a regular basis.

LA DCFS and Probation Waiver Teams continue to work in concert and participate in regular Waiver Management Team meetings to provide project coordination and updates and discuss next steps. Both Departments attend bi-monthly implementation meetings with Casey Family Programs and monthly County Steering Committee meetings with the Chief Executive Office (CEO) and have made numerous presentations to the Board of Supervisors, Justice and Children's Deputies, Children's Commission and CEO. The Departments jointly sponsored a community stakeholder meeting on July 14, 2008, providing staff, other County participants, community partners and stakeholders with a CAP update.

LA DCFS

In addition to these joint efforts, LA DCFS continues to be involved in the following:

The DCFS Waiver Coordinator participates in a ***Monthly Waiver County Coordinator Call*** with Alameda County and the CDSS Project Manager.

The DCFS Executive Team is led by the Director and meets on a weekly basis; the Waiver Coordinator provides updates, and upper level administration discusses CAP activities, status and challenges.

In addition, the ***DCFS Waiver Team*** meets on a regular basis to discuss progress and day-to-day operations.

CAP State/County Fiscal Workgroup has periodic conference calls led by CDSS with Los Angeles and Alameda Counties to discuss and resolve fiscal issues.

CAP State/County Evaluation Workgroup has periodic conference calls led by CDSS with Los Angeles and Alameda Counties to discuss and resolve evaluation issues.

Family Team Decision Making Roundtable meets on a monthly basis with the TDM Manager and TDM facilitators countywide to address policy, practice and operational issues and may use the process as a vehicle to address the implementation of permanency planning conferences (PPC).

PPC/TDM Facilitators meet bi-weekly to address implementation of PPC/TDMs and outcomes related to PPCs held for youth in group homes.

Youth Permanency Implementation Workgroup meets bi-weekly to address policy and practice issues and to expedite implementation of the Youth Permanency Units. A subcommittee, addressing Data Outcomes specific to the Permanency Units, also meets on an as needed basis.

Up-front Assessment meetings occur several times each month to address the implementation of up-front assessments, data collection and outcomes evaluation. Similar meetings take place with contracted up-front assessment providers.

The Residentially-Based Services (RBS) Workgroup has been on hiatus for the past several months while its subgroup, the RBS Collaborative, meets semi-monthly regarding a redesign proposal for residential care for DCFS youth.

Other meetings are ongoing with the Children's Commissioners, Board Offices, and CEO budget analysts specific to LA DCFS project components.

PROBATION

Probation has facilitated the following project meetings specific to their project priorities:

Weekly Probation Title IV-E Management Meetings help guide implementation of the CAP Plan and ensure fidelity to the planned strategies.

Quarterly Group Home Provider Meetings are held to address communication needs under the waiver, facilitate communication for CAP implementation to Probation's group home providers and provide feedback on barriers, successes and opportunities.

Quarterly Group Homes Administrators Meetings are held to increase communication during the waiver project period.

Bench Officers Meetings are convened to inform Delinquency Bench Officers on the progress of Probation waiver efforts and to receive feedback that could be included in ongoing efforts to improve services and move system improvements forward.

CAP Stakeholder's Steering Committee (Probation-Specific) consist of representatives from group home providers, Children's Commission, bench officers, school districts, Public Defender's Office, Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Probation, has been charged with assisting Probation's efforts to align its foster care Placement Operation with CAP planning efforts and the implementation of CAP programs and services.

Monthly conference calls are held with the CEO and DMH regarding Title IV-E administrative and operational needs of all Probation Waiver initiatives.

Monthly conference calls or formal meetings are held with a Casey Family Programs consultant for Probation's Practice Model that impacts waiver efforts. In addition, **monthly conference calls are held with Casey Family Programs** regarding Probation waiver efforts and/or needs.

Other meetings are ongoing with the Children's and Probation Commissioners, Board Offices, and CEO budget analysts specific to the Probation project components.

SPECIFIC PROGRAM AND POLICY CHANGES

LA DCFS policy on TDM has been revised to address the use of Permanency Planning Conferences in each of the Department's regional offices. Formal policy has also been written and disseminated to all staff regarding the YP Units in the three DCFS offices and the implementation of up-front assessments in all DCFS regional offices and ERCP.

Probation has implemented a standardized Cross-Systems Assessment Reporting Tool. This tool ensures that all necessary client information is included in the assessment and reported. This information assists the supervision Deputy Probation Officer and the group home and/or caregiver in addressing each client's needs.

Due to the need to capture and track accurate Probation foster care data that are critical for waiver strategy implementation, a new unit of operation has been developed. This operation is charged with tracking all Probation foster care youth and the assistance payments made on their behalf, including Wraparound Services. The new unit for Prospective Authorization and Utilization Review is housed within the Placement Administrative Services operation.

EVALUATION ACTIVITIES AND DATA TRACKING

The primary purpose of the state-level CAP evaluation is to determine whether changes in the funding structure for foster care will result in changes in the functioning of county child welfare systems that lead to improved outcomes for dependent and delinquent children and their families. During November and December 2008, the state evaluator conducted a series of key stakeholder interviews with Los Angeles County's external partners in an effort to identify community involvement and overall understanding of the CAP project.

LA DCFS, in conjunction with Casey Family Programs and Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey, has begun their local efforts to evaluate the Los Angeles Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP) and Point of Engagement (POE). The PIDP is an innovative countywide effort to demonstrate effective approaches to reducing child abuse and neglect by creating a comprehensive, strength-based, prevention system. LA DCFS has been able to use the financial flexibility under the CAP to support families through the POE differential response linkages to community-based resources, services and supports. Further information from the Casey Family Programs PIDP mid-course report dated January 22, 2009 is provided in Appendix B.

The evaluations of POE and PIDP are similar enough that many data collection tasks can be merged – especially since the prevention evaluation built on the original POE evaluation. On November 17, 2008, LA DCFS held a PIDP-POE Learning Session with over 150 attendees from a diverse group of public and private sector agencies and communities. Representatives from the different Service Planning Areas (SPA) convened during afternoon breakout learning sessions to discuss, compare and contrast their experiences in implementing new strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect in the different regions of Los Angeles County.

Dr. McCroskey began conducting interviews in November 2008 in the LA DCFS regional offices with four levels of staff: Regional Administrators, Assistant Regional Administrators, Supervising Children's Social Workers and Children's Social Workers. Interviews are intended to collect information regarding the history, context and implementation of POE in each regional office and the impact of POE on outcomes for children and families.

Probation has incorporated many of the CAP data needs into the automated system that will be implemented in March 2009. It is anticipated that the new system will be able to capture the number of active placement youth, number of closed placement cases, average length of stay in out-of-home care, number of placement episodes, number and type of outreach services provided for each case, and assistance payment costs for all Probation Placement youth. Additionally, Probation is continuing to work with LA DCFS and the state evaluator in identifying data that are currently available and needed data enhancements.

C. IMPLEMENTED STRATEGIES AND EXPENDITURES

LA DCFS

After reviewing the target populations, ease and speed of implementation efforts, and breadth of impact on the desired CAP outcomes, LA DCFS is continuing to operate the three first sequence priority initiatives from year one: *Family Team Decision Making (FTDM)*, *Family Finding and Engagement*, and *Up-front Assessments*. For the period of July 2008 to December 2008, the total amount of expenditures incurred for these strategies is \$1,873,324. This amount includes salaries and employee benefits in the amount of \$1,498,659 and Indirect Costs in the amount of \$374,665.

EXPANSION OF FAMILY TEAM DECISION MAKING CONFERENCES

As previously reported LA DCFS increased the number of FTDM facilitators so that regular multi-disciplinary team conferences could be held for children placed in group homes or in foster care for two years or longer with no identified permanency resource. FTDM facilitators were selected, hired and trained for fourteen specialized positions and became operational in DCFS regional offices between January and April 2008.

The addition of the fourteen facilitators allows for regular Permanency Planning Conferences (PPCs) modeled on Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings to ensure that

a multi-disciplinary team of professionals, family members and caregivers meet regularly to focus on the urgent permanency needs of these youth. TDM facilitators continue to receive ongoing training on facilitation, and LA DCFS receives technical assistance in this regard from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's California Family-to-Family consultants.

Outcomes from the TDM expansion have been encouraging. By June 30, 2008, 222 youth in group home placements had a PPC held to focus on their permanency plan. These conferences resulted in identified plans for 61 children to move to the home of a parent or relative; and 59 children to move to a reduced level of placement, including foster family agencies, licensed foster homes, or specialized foster homes.

Between July 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008, an additional 408 permanency planning conferences were held. Data are available for 11 of the 21 offices. Of the 243 conferences held at these offices, plans were identified for 39 children to move to the home of a parent or relative and 41 children to move to a reduced level of placement, including foster family agencies, licensed foster homes, or specialized foster homes. The specialized facilitators will continue to convene PPCs for these youth to ensure that all appropriate actions are taken. There are approximately 1,050 DCFS youth in group home placements in Los Angeles County, and the goal is to hold a PPC for each youth.

FOCUSED FAMILY FINDING AND ENGAGEMENT THROUGH PILOT SPECIALIZED PERMANENCY UNITS AT THREE REGIONAL OFFICES

The Specialized Youth Permanency (YP) Units were established to target LA DCFS' older high need youth most at risk of aging out of foster care with no permanent connections. Children's Social Workers (CWS) in the YP Units carry reduced caseloads and utilize family finding and engagement strategies to identify and connect youth with extended family members. The YP Implementation Workgroup created formal written policy and protocols for the YP Units, and continues to meet on a bi-monthly basis to discuss ongoing policy issues, case criteria, training, and data collection.

As of April 2008, two regional offices, Metro North and Pomona, were operational and fully staffed with CSWs and Supervising Children's Social Workers (SCSW) at the reduced caseload of fifteen (which is flexible up to 24:1 including siblings and cases close to achieving permanency). The Santa Clarita Office, identified as the third regional office for this pilot, has gradually come on board since June 2008; the Unit is currently staffed by one SCSW, one half-time and three full-time CSWs with reduced caseloads.

YP Unit SCSWs are very enthusiastic about the outcomes for the youth they serve. They report that, due to reduced caseloads and expert training, YP Unit CSWs are better able to establish relationships with the youth and focus their energies on identifying and reconnecting the youth with family. Over the reporting period, the Metro North YP Unit has served 75 youth. Of these 75 youth, eleven returned home, four are under legal guardianship, 13 were placed with relatives, 17 were placed in lower levels

of care, 22 have plans of adoption, and four have plans of guardianship. Fifty-three of the youth currently being served who were previously identified as having no or limited connections with family now have ongoing visits with siblings or other family members.

Over the reporting period, the Pomona YP Unit has served 72 youth. Six successfully exited the system with two through adoption, one through legal guardianship, and three through emancipation with lifelong connections. In addition, 16 moved into lower levels of care, including seven placed with relatives; one reunified with parents; 23 have a plan of adoption; and 13 have a plan of guardianship. Sixty youth are currently served by the Pomona YP Unit; 55 of these youth who were previously identified as having no or limited connections with family now have ongoing visits with siblings and other family members.

The Santa Clarita YP Unit currently serves 58 youth. Six have adoption plans, two have legal guardianship plans, one has reunified with parents, five have moved to lower levels of care, five have achieved “permanent and meaningful connections,” and one youth has passed her General Educational Development (GED) test due to the ongoing support and guidance of her CSW.

UP-FRONT ASSESSMENTS ON HIGH RISK CASES FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

This priority initiative seeks to prevent unnecessary foster care placements through more thorough investigation and assessment of Child Protection Hotline (Hotline) referrals of alleged child abuse and neglect that require special expertise involving substance abuse, domestic violence and/or mental health issues. Assessments are conducted on the target population of families with high-risk Hotline referrals; experts in substance abuse, domestic violence and mental health services provide immediate, comprehensive assessments, and connect families to treatment and ancillary services in the community. These services allow Emergency Response (ER) CSWs to make more informed case decisions, and in many cases, allow children to remain safely in their homes.

Since October 1, 2007, DCFS has contracted with SHIELDS for Families to provide up-front assessments for the Compton Office. In May 2008, two additional regional offices, Metro North and Wateridge, and the ERCP, which handles referrals of child abuse and neglect at night, on weekends and holidays, began implementing and utilizing up-front assessments in a limited fashion, with a number of additional contracted agencies in their Service Planning Areas (SPA). Approximately 400 assessments were completed as of June 30, 2008. In the subsequent five months (July to November) 392 additional assessments were completed, serving 307 families with 688 children.

PROBATION

After review and analysis of data regarding the impact of CAP services on outcomes during year one, Probation has committed to the continuation of the first sequence priorities; *Cross-Systems Case Assessment and Case Planning and Expansion of*

Functional Family Therapy (FFT). Additionally, Probation has identified a third program priority that will be implemented in the second year of the CAP, *establishment of a Prospective Authorization and Utilization Review Unit*.

ENHANCED CROSS-SYSTEMS CASE ASSESSMENT AND CASE PLANNING

Probation and DMH continued to utilize the Cross-Systems Case Assessment and Planning Initiative implemented in the first year of the CAP. This initiative promotes appropriate placement decisions and collaboration; enhanced case planning efforts; increased placement stability and decreased delays in critical treatment during the transition from detention to out-of-home care. Probation and DMH made enhancements to the existing assessment-reporting tool to ensure that all critical information is provided to both the supervision Deputy Probation Officer (DPO) and the out-of-home care provider.

During the January 1, 2008 to June 30, 2008 period, 110 Probation youth in suitable placement were administered the Cross-Systems Case Assessment. Findings indicated that, of the 110 youth sample: the average age was 15 years; 33.6 percent recidivated (were re-arrested and returned to Juvenile Hall); 16.4 percent recidivated in 30 days or less; 14.5 percent had minimal to no mental health histories and were not taking psychotropic medication; 12.7 percent had serious mental health histories and chronic psychiatric issues; 10.9 percent had serious mental health problems in combination with serious behavior problems; and, 10.9 percent had solely serious behavior problems.

EXPANSION OF FUNCTIONAL FAMILY THERAPY

As previously reported probation's Placement Community Transition Services (PCTS) utilizes FFT services as one of its core community based supportive after-care services. Two Community Based Organizations, SHIELDS for Families, and Starview Community Services, provide these services to Probation youth and their families. In order to qualify for FFT services, youth must have previously resided in congregate care and been released to their parents with FFT services.

As of December 2008, Probation enrolled 274 Placement youth and their families in FFT. Of this number, 58 youth have successfully graduated FFT and 145 still receive services. Additionally, in an effort to support FFT activities, Probation trained 14 Placement Community Transition Services (PCTS) DPOs in the use of FFT to serve youth and families that reside outside the service areas of the two contracted vendors. On December 1, 2008, PCTS Supervising Deputy Probation Officers (SDPO) were trained in Functional Family Probation (FFP). On January 26, 2009, 14 supervision PCTS DPOs will receive FFP training. The DPOs will use the new model of supervision once they have completed the training, as required by the National FFP program. This training, coordinated by the California Institute for Mental Health (CIMH), will continue until all 40 PCTS DPOs are trained in FFP.

Between July 2007 and August 2008, 129 Probation youth and their families have received FFT services. Nineteen youth continued to receive FFT treatment, and 110 youth have been discharged from treatment, 52 (47 percent) of which completed FFT treatment. The average length of treatment for all completed cases was 147 days. The youth who participated in FFT were predominately male and were, on average, 15.5 years of age. Fifty-three percent were Hispanic, 42 percent African-American, 2.3 percent Caucasian, and 2.3 percent Asian.

RESTRUCTURE OF PLACEMENT SERVICES

As previously reported Probation has begun to restructure its Placement Services Operation under a Placement Restructuring Steering Committee with three workgroups aligned with the initiatives being implemented under the CAP: the Cross-Systems Case Assessment Planning Workgroup; the Residentially-Based Services (RBS) Workgroup; and the Transition and Aftercare Workgroup. The development and collaboration efforts by these workgroups are ongoing and supports the Cross-systems case assessment and expansion of FFT activities described above. The Placement Restructuring Steering Committee will be reviewing and providing feedback on the following:

- Probation Practice Model, developed by Probation and the Casey Family Programs contracted consultant, which will directly target the Department's placement youth and/or youth identified as at imminent-risk of removal from their homes, and
- Recommended new CAP initiatives and possible supervision models in an effort to determine which initiatives and supervision modifications will be implemented next.

The Placement Restructuring Steering Committee will also assist in identifying needed system improvements and administrative infrastructure needs that will build on supporting current programs while providing enhanced services.

UTILIZATION OF AFTERCARE SUPPORT SERVICES

As previously reported, the Placement Services Bureau established the PCTS operation. PCTS DPOs carry reduced caseloads and work in concert with MST and FFT providers. Aftercare DPOs began taking cases in July, 2008. In addition, a Group Home Liaison position was established to support Residentially-Based (Placement) DPOs, treatment service providers, group home providers and LA DCFS specifically in the areas of transition and transition/discharge planning.

THE PROSPECTIVE AUTHORIZATION AND UTILIZATION REVIEW UNIT (NEW ACTIVITY)

The Prospective Authorization and Utilization Review Unit will be established to assist in the decision making process to match youth and families with appropriate services, improving consistency in service utilization, as referrals to services will be pre-approved, based on whether or not a youth and family meet the specified focus for each service. This unit will be responsible for reviewing the use of each of these services at

designated intervals to ensure that there is a systematic approach to the rationale that allows for extended services that may be required to obtain desired outcomes on a case-by-case basis. This will improve Probation's ability to strategically manage available resources and maximize fiscal resources. Implementation is scheduled for April 2009.

Implementation Barriers Encountered

Over year one and continuing both counties identified barriers related to the fiscal systems for the waiver. Specifically, an increased workload has been generated by the use of manual systems to capture and track data and funding sources. Los Angeles County also identified additional areas related to staffing and probation data. Both counties have requested assistance from CDSS in removing the barriers around use of CWS/CMS for probation staff.

LA DCFS has experienced the following challenges in implementing the CAP:

- Difficulty in the timely hiring and reporting of allocated staff for expanded FTDM and YP Units due to county budgeting and hiring requirements;
- Shortage of staff required to monitor up-front assessment implementation; and,
- Lack of an automated system to track expenditures and revenue in more detail, requiring LA DCFS to create manual spreadsheets to accurately identify and track data and funding sources.

Probation has experienced the following challenges in implementing the CAP:

- Inability to warehouse and access foster care data for the state evaluation. Probation cannot readily access foster care data with its current technology. The difficulty reconciling Probation records and accessing Child Welfare Services/Case Management Systems (CWS/CMS) data has required a significant workforce effort for Probation.
- Lack of an automated system to track Probation Placement expenditures, requiring Probation to create separate spreadsheets to accurately identify and manually track data for each Placement case and all case activity to identify projected assistance payment costs and/or reductions as well as numerous trend data.
- Inability to obtain additional required CAP expenditure information, specifically funds used for Wraparound Services. Currently, LA DCFS and Probation are working together to identify the best methods for sharing information leading to appropriate tracking, monitoring, and data reconciliation.

State Initiatives and Pilot Programs

The spending flexibility under the CAP provides counties the opportunity to test alternate funding models, provide innovative services, and to implement best practices and evidenced based programs. Updated activities for the current state initiatives are:

RESIDENTIALLY-BASED SERVICES REFORM

Assembly Bill (AB) 1453 (Chapter 466, Statutes of 2007) allows both CAP counties, at their option, and two other counties or consortium of counties to enter into voluntary agreements with private nonprofit agencies to transform all or part of an existing group home into an Residentially-Based Services (RBS) program and test RBS models to be implemented concurrently with the plan. Los Angeles County is the only CAP county participating in the RBS reform initiative at this time.

As previously reported LA DCFS will participate in RBS to pilot an alternative program design and funding model under the authority of AB 1453. The model is designed to provide concurrent wraparound services to youth and their families while youth are placed in selected RCL 12 and 14 group homes for reduced lengths of stay, and ongoing wraparound and community-based care after the youth exit residential care. Funding for concurrent wraparound services will come from savings realized from reduced lengths of stay, and a risk pool will set aside funding for youth with extended stays and unanticipated costs.

On October 15, 2008, Los Angeles County issued a Request for Information (RFI) to test market interest in providing RBS services. Several providers submitted letters of interest and met the minimum qualifications. LA DCFS subsequently submitted a letter to CDSS asking for permission to formally identify these providers and add RBS as an amendment to their current and upcoming Wraparound contracts. With CDSS approval, LA DCFS will begin discussions with the providers that responded to the RFI and met the minimum qualifications. At this time, the county has chosen three out of the seven interested providers for their RBS implementation. The CDSS contract extension approval letter was issued in late January 2009. In addition, on November 5-6, 2008, LA DCFS and DMH administrative staff and several Los Angeles County providers attended the RBS symposium which highlighted RBS implementation challenges and related topics to assist in developing RBS plans.

LA DCFS continues to work with its RBS consultants on an implementation plan due to CDSS in March 2009. A preliminary review of their program design, including system description and alternative funding model, voluntary agreement and waiver request was completed on October 17, 2008. CDSS has issued a new template to the RBS counties to provide more detailed information for their RBS plans. LA DCFS will provide their updated plan including deliverables by March 1, 2009, and will present their plan at the RBS forum on March 4-5, 2009. The plan will identify the specific target population to be enrolled in the program with a tentative date for county implementation to begin by July 1, 2009. Further information about RBS implementation underway in California can be found at www.rbsreform.org.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY INTENSIVE TREATMENT FOSTER CARE PILOT PROGRAM

Under the CAP, LA DCFS received approval from CDSS for a State Waiver to allow Foster Family Agency (FFA) rate flexibility to provide innovative services through a pilot ITFC program. The pilot will develop Intensive Treatment Foster Care (ITFC) beds for 72 children and Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) beds for 60 children, as alternatives to placing children in group homes. The ITFC FFA's will implement specific trauma-focused evidence based treatment models and MTFC, a highly structured model of treatment foster care, to be funded at the ITFC payment rate.

As previously reported, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved contracts for three ITFC providers for 24 beds each and two additional providers for 60 MTFC beds. All five providers signed their contracts in early January 2008, providing a total of 132 beds for the two program types. As of December 31, 2008, 24 beds were available and 13 children were placed in these beds. Remaining empty beds are in the assessment process and have been matched with children. In addition, 14 homes are in various stages of certification. Although certification is not complete, potential matches for children with most of these homes have been made while the four to six week assessment process is completed. The potential matching process will expedite placements once the homes have been certified.

IV. EVALUATION STATUS

Evaluation Overview

The primary purpose of the CAP evaluation is to determine whether and how changes in the funding structure for foster care (i.e., ending the entitlement, eliminating eligibility restrictions, and capping the dollar amount in exchange for spending flexibility) will impact the functioning of county child welfare systems and relevant probation systems. The secondary purpose of the evaluation is to assess outcomes for dependent and delinquent children and their families before and after the implementation of the CAP.

As previously reported to DHHS, in the first year of the evaluation, activities primarily were in support of the data collection for the process study component. Activities addressing data sources and data collection issues for the fiscal and outcome studies were also conducted. In addition, the initial site visit and one follow-up site visit including focus groups and interviews were completed in both counties. This section describes activities for the first six months of the second year of the CAP evaluation that covers the period between July 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008.

Activities Completed

PROCESS STUDY

Ongoing data collection and data analysis were the predominant process study activities during this reporting period.

A second round of key informant interviews were conducted with representatives from the CDSS both in-person and via the telephone between September and November 2008. The purpose of the interviews was to solicit input about the implementation of the CAP from the perspective of the state agency representatives overseeing the project. Interviewees included individuals from the programmatic and fiscal areas involved with the CAP's implementation. The protocol used to guide the interviews can be found in Appendix C.

Key informant interviews conducted during the site visits to counties were expanded during this reporting period to include a variety of local stakeholders in the CAP. Beginning in September 2008, at the request of the evaluator, representatives from both counties' child welfare and probation departments provided contact information for the juvenile court presiding judge, members of the Board of Supervisors, the county administrator/executive office, and key union representatives in their respective counties. County representatives also provided a list of additional community stakeholders that they felt had an important perspective on the CAP. These community stakeholders included local children's commissions, service provider representatives, and community advocacy organizations.

The key informant interviews conducted during this reporting period in both counties were focused on the first group of stakeholders provided by the county representatives. Three of the twelve stakeholders contacted beginning in October 2008 have been interviewed to date. These interviews were conducted in-person and via the telephone. The protocol used to guide the interviews can be found in Appendix C.

The analysis of data collected through previous site visits through focus groups, key informant interviews, and document collection continued during this reporting period. On-going data analysis also included information collected from the frontline/supervisor staff survey, including the staff's understanding of the CAP, their attitudes toward the CAP, and the impact the CAP has on their work with children and families.

FISCAL STUDY

The primary activity in the fiscal study portion of the evaluation during this reporting period has been to continue the process for obtaining the necessary data from the identified data sources. During the first year, through discussions with state and county fiscal staff, it was determined that the main data source for the fiscal study would be the County Expense Claim (CEC), the CA 800, and the IV-E Waiver Database developed by CDSS for the CAP. The CEC is used by CDSS to authorize, and the counties to obtain, federal and state reimbursement for costs incurred administering mandated programs. County time studies are the primary means of allocating the majority of costs within the CEC. The CA 800 Foster Care Assistance claim is the parallel process for the counties to claim assistance costs incurred in providing foster care payments. The new IV-E Waiver Access Database created for the two county claiming system is designed to provide the structure for claiming and payment authorization for the two

participating CAP counties. Data provided by the counties from existing fiscal tracking processes will augment the data available from the state as well as data from manual tracking and new processes developed by the counties in response to the CAP.

OUTCOME STUDY

The activities conducted for the outcome study during this reporting period focused on tracking any changes in the California Child Welfare Services Outcome and Accountability System and determining the availability of probation data in the system. Work has continued toward securing the necessary outcome data from the probation system in both counties. During the prior reporting period probation data was found to be accessible through the CDSS and University of California at Berkeley Collaboration, Child Welfare Services Dynamic Report System Website, despite probation's lack of direct access to Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS). As previously reported, consultation between the evaluator and CDSS determined that the relevant CDSS data unit had increased the amount of information extracted from the single source of information provided by county probation departments to CDSS regarding children served using Title IV-E funds.

Given the ongoing challenge of obtaining probation data through the CWS/CMS system, both probation departments in the participating CAP counties have undertaken a labor intensive data validation process that has continued during this reporting period to ensure the accuracy of the data available in the CWS/CMS reports. As part of a statewide effort to ensure valid data, CDSS has been working with all counties to manually review and close out open cases that have no placement or services indicated on CWS/CMS. In addition, both county probation departments have data development efforts underway to increase the availability of outcome data.

ADDITIONAL EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

In July 2008, the evaluator participated in the Alameda County Title IV-E Waiver Community Forum and the Los Angeles County Title IV-E Waiver LOG (Learning Organization Group). The events were designed to provide CAP stakeholders in each county with information on implementation and solicit input on various aspects of the CAP. The evaluator provided an overview of the evaluation in each county including a description of the evaluation, a status report of evaluation activities, and several preliminary observations about the implementation of the CAP (discussed below). Hiring processes for additional evaluation staff were also conducted during this reporting period. A graduate student researcher was hired and assisted in the data analysis. A research specialist was also hired and will begin working on the evaluation at the beginning of the next reporting period.

Interim Findings

Several preliminary observations emerged from the process study portion of the evaluation.

First, there appears to be a basic understanding of what the CAP is amongst frontline staff and supervisors; that it is not a program but a funding mechanism, or a change in a funding mechanism. This basic understanding seems to hold true for both departments in both counties.

Second, there was a supposition at the start of the CAP that in order for county departments to operate within a capped allocation environment, they would need to alter their operations to lower the number of youth entering their systems, reduce the length of time youth had contact with the system, and reduce the per case cost of operating the system. This was particularly true for the Departments of Children and Family Services. Although not originally anticipated, initial site visits and interviews with county representatives revealed that many of the necessary activities were already being implemented primarily under the framework of the Annie E. Casey Foundation Family to Family Initiative.

Finally, there is some variation in how the CAP is being used by the county departments. In general, the Departments of Children and Family Services in both counties are using the CAP to expand on existing services and service philosophies. The Departments of Juvenile Probation view the CAP as an opportunity to make changes to their service delivery systems and service philosophies, in the direction already undertaken by their counterparts in child welfare.

A discussion of these observations, as well as additional provisional findings, will be presented in the Interim Evaluation Report due to be submitted in February 2010.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Alameda County Documents
- Appendix B: Los Angeles County Documents
- Appendix C: Evaluation Data Collection Protocols